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PROPOSED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1998-2001

Programme 8. Development support and management services

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8.1 The overall orientation of the programme, which is under the responsibility of the Department for Development Support and Management Services, is to enhance and support, through technical cooperation, the national efforts of Member States, in particular developing countries and the least developed among them, as well as economies in transition, to build their human and institutional capabilities and infrastructures to formulate and effectively implement economic and social policies that will contribute to sustainable, people-centred development and the eradication of poverty. To this end, the programme makes available to developing countries and economies in transition substantive knowledge and know-how in public administration and finance, economic and social policy and planning, and natural resources and energy planning and management.

8.2 The programme promotes, within the context of national needs and priorities, the development of programmes and projects for national execution aimed at strengthening national human, institutional and policy-making capabilities. In so doing, the programme also takes into account the outcomes and commitments of relevant United Nations conferences, in particular the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Summit on Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, as well as the outcome of the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly on public administration and development. Through its activities, the programme represents a crucial interface between global policies and national action, serving as a catalyst for action-oriented national and community programmes and projects that integrate sectoral measures in coherent, multisectoral strategies. As circumstances require, the programme's expertise in its areas of specialization will continue to be made available to support United Nations reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in countries in post-conflict situations in cooperation with other United Nations funds and programmes.

8.3 The mandate for the programme derives from General Assembly resolution 47/212 B of 6 May 1993. The programme is also guided by Assembly resolutions 44/211 of 22 December 1989 and 47/199 of 22 December 1992, on operational activities for development, and resolution 50/225 of 19 April 1996, on public administration and development.

8.4 By the end of the period covered by the plan, it is expected that the programme will have achieved the following:

(a) Built up or strengthened institutional, human resources, managerial and policy planning capacities in developing countries and economies in transition;

(b) Expanded the dissemination to Governments of the lessons of international and national experience in the Department's spheres of competence;

(c) Enhanced cooperation with other United Nations departments, as well as regional economic commissions, organizations, funds, programmes, United Nations system development financing institutions and non-governmental organizations, in the development of joint activities at the country level to ensure common efforts towards promoting sustainable development in accordance with national needs and priorities;

(d) Provided substantive contributions based on the programme's practical country experiences in its areas of specialization for international policy discussion.

Subprogramme 8.1 Public administration and development management

8.5 Developments in public administration have been influenced in recent years by fundamental changes, including technological advances, global economic interdependence, aggravation of social problems and the growing importance of the private sector. In this changed global context, several Governments are attempting to redirect the role of the State to that of policy management and monitoring and the creation of an enabling environment. There is also growing demand to involve citizens in the decision-making process and for public administration to be more transparent, accountable and responsive to citizens' needs and demands.

8.6 The objectives of the subprogramme, which is implemented by the Division of Public Administration and Development Management, are:

(a) To facilitate intergovernmental dialogue on available approaches, systems and methods in public administration and to identify new and emerging issues through the establishment of a clearing-house mechanism and ensuring the collection and analysis of experiences, in particular best practices, and facilitating dissemination of such information;

(b) To mobilize other actors in the area of public administration and development management, such as global and regional professional organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and academic institutions, to provide support to and to participate in United Nations activities in this field;

(c) To assist Governments, at their request, in strengthening their capacity for policy development, administrative restructuring, civil service reform, human resources development and public administration training; improving performance in the public sector; increasing public/private sector interaction; managing development programmes; and enhancing government legal capacity;

(d) To assist Governments, at their request, in developing the necessary capabilities to enable public administration to implement the commitments agreed upon at major United Nations conferences in an effective and coordinated manner, ensuring the maintenance of essential basic government services and functions during times of crisis and developing strategies for rebuilding a viable public administration in countries undergoing post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction;

(e) To broaden Governments' resource mobilization and revenue administration capacities, enhance the efficiency and performance of tax administration and improve financial management skills in budgeting systems and techniques, accounting and auditing;

(f) To enhance national capacity for economic and social development, including the strengthening of relevant institutional, human resources, policy-analysis and policy-making infrastructure in developing countries and economies in transition;

(g) To improve planning, coordination and management of external financial and technical assistance available to Governments within their overall development priorities and their need for technical assistance;

(h) To promote and enhance the dissemination of public sector information systems for economic analysis and financial management by developing computer-based management information systems dealing with policy analysis and macroeconomic issues.

Subprogramme 8.2 Environment and social development management

8.7 The excessive use of natural resources in many areas, as well as the growth of poverty over broad geographical areas, pose a grave threat to the global environment, undermining possibilities of attaining sustainable development. A national commitment to sustainable development, in line with the principles articulated at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and Agenda 21, requires promotion of the use of renewable resources and efforts to use non-renewable resources more rationally. It may mean changing consumption patterns to increase the use of products and production processes that have the least adverse impact on the environment. In many countries, strategies need to be defined and policies formulated to contend simultaneously with poverty, resource degradation and post-conflict reconstruction requirements.

8.8 The subprogramme, which is implemented by the Division for Environment Management and Social Development, provides assistance in conceptualizing, formulating and implementing action-oriented, people-centred programmes at the national level emphasizing the interface between natural resources, environmental management and social development through operational projects and substantive contributions to relevant global conferences and intergovernmental bodies. The objectives of the subprogramme are to assist Governments and communities, at their request, as follows:

(a) To devise operational strategies that promote sustainable use of natural resources and equitable social development. These include reformulation of policies governing the use of natural resources and energy and production processes that have the least adverse impact on the environment;

(b) To formulate cross-sectoral strategies and programmes to enable Governments and local communities to improve economic and social conditions among vulnerable groups, such as ethnic minorities, women, youth and the elderly, especially in the context of post-conflict and post-disaster rehabilitation. Such strategies will include measures to expand community access to credit in rural areas and institutional assistance to income-generating artisanal industries and other small enterprises based on reliable access to energy, water and other natural resources particularly in the least developed countries;

(c) To strengthen the institutional, human resources and policy-making capabilities of Governments and communities in order to foster the effective planning and management of natural resources; to promote an iterative and multisectoral approach to water resources management that integrates technological, socio-economic, environmental and human health considerations and involves local initiatives and participation in such development efforts; and to formulate policies on mineral resources that encourage environmentally sound production practices;

(d) To promote the use of modern surveying and mapping techniques as a tool for infrastructure and land-use planning for sustainable development, including assistance to various cartographic, cadastral and hydrographic services at the national and local levels;

(e) To strengthen the institutional capacity of Governments and communities for the development, utilization and commercialization of new and renewable energy sources; to develop national and indigenous capacity in assessment and management of energy resources and services; to introduce changes in energy consumption patterns, focusing on conservation measures and demand-side management; to facilitate international and interregional connections for the transmission of electric power and transport of natural gas; and to promote technology transfer to different levels of government, civil society, community institutions and entrepreneurs.